

"I recommend that every UPS
worker read this pamphlet"

*Anne Mackie
editor, UPSurge*

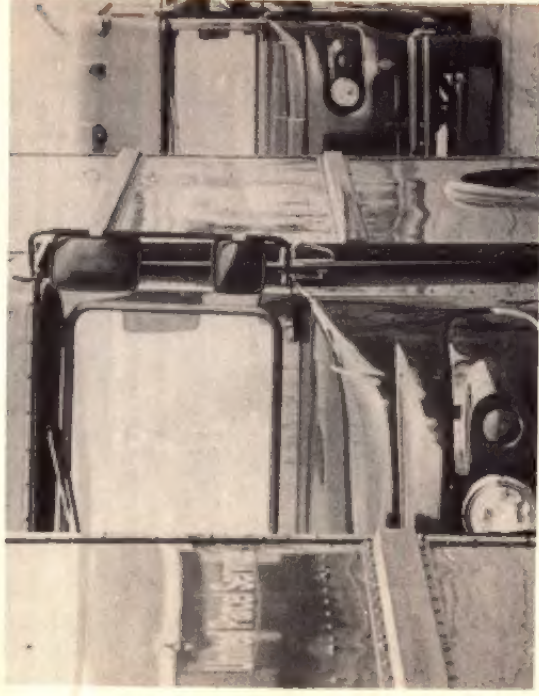
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BEAT THE BIG BROWN MACHINE



**AN INSIDE
LOOK AT UNITED PARCEL
BY MARY DEATON**

HOW TO BEAT THE BIG BROWN MACHINE



**AN INSIDE
LOOK AT UNITED PARCEL
BY MARY DEATON**

Who is 30 years old but looks old enough to retire?
 Who is clothed in obsolete Eisenhower attire?
 Who freezes his butt, garbed in glorious brown?
 As he delivers customer's packages all over town?
 Who works hard and when he gets home
 Has his pick of seats at the table for he eats all alone.
 Who gets his meals that are served cut and dried
 With choices of reheated, rebaked and refried?
 Who sees his children maybe once during the week?
 The rest of the time they're in bed fast asleep.
 Who lays down just to rest his eyes,
 The next thing he knows it's time to rise.
 Who tries to get changes only for the better?
 And receives his thanks in a Warning Letter.

Who is too tired to go out with his wife?
 Who has little or no social life?
 Whose company forces him to work ten hours a day?
 No wonder a man is living this way!
 Who needs a wife understanding and kind?
 Who has a wife who is losing her mind?
 Who works for these people, the Sons-of-Pups?
 Yes, he's my husband, the man from UPS.

J.M.N.—A Wife who has been Down ever since UPS
 Buffalo, New York (from UPSurge, March, 1976)

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"Early in the morning factory whistle blows,
 Man rises from bed and puts on his clothes;
 Takes his lunch, walks out in the morning light,
 The work, the workin', just the workin' life..."

Bruce Springsteen

Introduction

Street lights break through the a.m. darkness as the men park their cars and walk toward the sprawling one-story building. A feeder truck pulls through the east gate, hauling a piggyback trailer just picked up on the train from Denver. The guard waves the driver through as he absent-mindedly glances at the I.D. cards being flashed at him by the arriving workers.

Inside, the building is uncharacteristically quiet now, with the sorting lines shut down for a break. They've been there six hours, two hours at over time. Sweating, tired man and women sit at the picnic tables in the break area as others sprawl along the walls, slowly puffing cigarettes and sipping coffee. The pre-loaders grunt greetings to the sorters and unloaders as they grab their own cups of coffee and walk reluctantly down the aisles to punch in at the time clock. A bell wails: belts whine into motion; workers pull to their feet and scatter throughout the building: "All right, back to work," demands the loudspeaker. The quiet is over. Another day begins at UPS.

When does it ever stop? The belts groan under the weight of parcels, sort cages empty and fill, empty and fill, trailers are loaded and unloaded, package cars leave full, come back full and

go out again to fill once more. Like a smoothly running engine, each piece of machinery moves in time to the unrelenting clock and the unending flow of packages. The maze of belts and cages moves with seeming ease through the cavernous space, spewing out each package at its proper destination. Human arms move mechanically over the brown river, each movement a reflex honed through constant use. Precise, efficient, productive—the most crucial part of the machine—the bodies blend into the noise and motion.

Everyday, at over 1,000 operating centers and HUB's around the country, 94,000 men and women report to work at United Parcel Service. We go because we have to work if our children are to eat, our rent is to be paid, the hot water heater fixed. Even if it's just to go to the movies Saturday night or have a beer with friends, we have to go to work.

We each have our dreams: college for the kids, a plant store, or perhaps a little custom body shop, a place where we'll be our own boss, set our own hours. But these dreams come true for only a tiny minority. Like millions of other workers in this country, we are doomed to spend our lives at a boss's beck and call. Maybe it will be at UPS, if we live long enough. If not, it will be somewhere else, selling our legs, arms and minds for a weekly paycheck. We are part of the working class.

"UPS is looking at it all as economics. They don't care if it's humane or not. They want to increase production without increasing employees, and they don't want anyone to be vocal, they just want to keep the machine moving."

Larry Arcia, Seattle steward
quoted in *UPSurge*

Life and death inside the Brown Machine

"Picking up and delivering over a million packages a day," wrote *Handling and Shipping* magazine in September, 1968, "takes the speed and agility of a one-armed juggler—you've got to keep things moving. UPS doesn't have a warehouse for parcels to lie around in. From pick-up to delivery, a package gathers no moss. It is always on the move." Every building, truck and moving belt at UPS has been carefully designed by industrial engineers for maximum efficiency. Since the first conveyor belt was installed in the Los Angeles HUB in 1924, the goal of UPS construction has been to increase the ease and speed with which packages move out of the delivery trucks and into the feeders or piggyback trailers which carry them across the country.

UPS spent millions on these improvements, \$140 million in 1976 alone. For each dollar they spent, they knew they would get more dollars in income. With each new technological advance, more volume could be added. The system grew until over 1.3 billion parcels, more than carried by the Post Office, would flow smoothly through the system, in 1978, never stopping until they

reached the consignee. The system inspires awe in every shipper. Other freight companies look enviously at UPS's growth. Since 1953, when UPS first began to carry general freight and went in to direct competition with truckers and the Post Office for the small parcels of this country, it has been steadily gaining a monopoly on that business because it does it cheaper and faster than anyone else. There is one flaw in the system, however. (1.)

*"End of the day, factory whistle cries,
Men walk through these gates
With death in their eyes...
Factory gives him life,
The work, the workin', just the workin' life..."*

Bruce Springsteen

"Keep it moving. Come on you assholes, get the lead out. Faster, faster. What the hell's the matter with you guys tonight?" The unload supervisor walks up and down the catwalk above the conveyor belt which runs along the back of the unloading bays. His shirt is starched and pressed, his tie neatly pinned. He carries a clipboard in his hand, occasionally marking down something with his black and gold company pen. Below him, thirty sweating workers furiously heft packages out of the trailers and onto the roller belts which carry them into the maze of webbed canvas and onto the sort aisles. Above the sorters, another pinned and starched man screams invectives. Up and down the bins, the pre-load supervisor bellows, too.

The toiling bodies are the Achilles heel of the system. Some nights they are too slow. One of them doesn't show up. They talk. They get tired. They stop to wipe their brows so the acrid beads of perspiration won't burn their eyes. They hurt. They make mistakes. They get fiesty and talk back. But the system won't function without them. It is the supervisors job to keep them working, faster if possible. Nothing must stand in the way of getting out those packages. Industrial engineering says each

1. All figures in this pamphlet are taken from UPS Annual Reports, and reports filed by UPS with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission.

unloader should unload 1200 parcels an hour. A sorter must sort 1200 parcels an hour. Those are the rules.

"If twenty-four unloaders are hired, in six weeks when their probation is up, there may be six of them left." Bill Bauman is a HUB steward in St. Louis. He's seen them come and go. "They like to keep pre-seniority people on that job. They can drive 'em as fast as they want and those people have no protection. Unloaders set the pace for the whole HUB. If they go fast, we all go fast."

Speed-up. Protectivity. Volume. Those are the by-words of UPS's success. Since 1968, when the East and Midwest were first linked, the total number of freight tons moved by UPS has grown from 2.1 million to over 7.0 million. The average number of tons handled by each employee has increased from 52.3 per year in 1969 to 63.9 in 1977. From 1975, when UPS acquired operating rights in all 50 states, to 1978, delivery volume increased 40 percent. Employment went up 29 percent. Many of these were part-timers, workers who do four hour shifts. Everything is subordinated to increasing production, including the lives of the men and women who move the packages.

Jim Reeder, a maintenance mechanic in Indianapolis, remembers that night during the first Christmas in the new HUB. The building plans had called for the installation of safety guards on all the belts, but they weren't installed. The contractor had told Jim UPS was trying to build a \$10 million building for \$6 million. It cost one worker both arms.

When Jim heard the call for help, he raced over to the belt, pulled out his razor knife and prepared to cut the man loose. Before he could start, a supervisor rushed up yelling, "Don't, don't. You can't cut the belt. We won't be able to run if you do that." A few weeks later, the guards were installed.

The workers in the San Bruno HUB in Northern California were concerned over dust levels in the trailers. The health department came in and said the level exceeded the recommended standards and workers were required to wear masks. Division manager Jim Peterson didn't care. He ruled masks were an "unnecessary expense" and refused to buy them.

Driving truck is a dangerous job. Statistics compiled by the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety of the Department of Transportation show it ranks with mining and construction work among

the top five industries for occupation injuries and fatalities. Not only do truckers have more injuries, they are hurt more severely. Safety should be a primary consideration for a trucking company. It isn't at UPS.

UPS designed fiberglass tractor cabs because they wanted to cut down the weight of the vehicles, allowing more packages to be loaded. A Chicago feeder driver, Ambrose Bentell, pretripped his tractor on a rainy night in 1975 and thought the tires looked unsafe. He called his supervisor, but the man refused to pull the tractor for repairs. Ambrose pulled his doubles onto the highway. Winds were gusting up to 50 miles an hour when he hit the pool of water. His trailers jack-knifed and Ambrose Bentell died, crushed inside his fiberglass cab.

An Orange Co., CA. driver was crushed to death when his package car overturned on a freeway ramp. The heavily loaded truck was top heavy with packages and couldn't hold the curve. Loss prevention was there within minutes, checking the load for damaged packages and painting over the UPS shield so nobody would know what company had killed that man.

Supervisors discourage workers from filing accident reports on all but the most severe accidents. Drivers who sprain their ankles are told to continue deliveries and "walk it off." A supervisor in Denver refused to call an ambulance for a man knocked unconscious when the false floor of a trailer fell on him. Another worker had to punch out and drive the man to a doctor. An Indianapolis worker was refused disability payments because the company claimed his injury resulted from incorrect lifting of a package. He was too old, the management said, to pick anything up without bending his knees. A mechanic who developed phlebitis after having his ankle crushed by the door of an air diverter was refused disability when the company claimed the phlebitis wasn't their fault.

Bill Bauman believes the equipment at UPS is not designed to be unsafe. "It's like a car," he said. "If you drive it at the speed limit, you'll be all right. But start speeding or pulling crazy maneuvers, and you're bound to have an accident." Strained backs, arms caught in conveyor belts, falling packages that break bones, slips on wet floors, hands injured while greasing moving belts, concussion sustained while jumping out of package cars with loaded arms, arms caught between docks and moving cages and

broken; all of these accidents happen because supervisors refuse to slow the pace. It would be easy to use ladders to break up jams. It would be easy to shut down belts in order to retrieve fallen packages. It would be easy to train people in proper lifting methods. These things would make work safer. They would also slow down the system and cost money; money and time UPS won't spend because it is cheaper for them to pay our medical bills and burial expenses than reduce work to a sane speed.

"We must continue and accelerate our efforts to absorb as much as possible of...rising costs by tighter controls and further improvements in our operating efficiency."

UPS Annual Report for 1976

While more and more workers are getting injured trying to keep up with the insane velocity of the work, UPS is devising more ways to make the system faster. The attack has been double edged—eliminate full time jobs whenever possible and further increase the production of those who are working. Although part-timers had existed in isolated areas of the country for many years (Southern California has had them since the '60's) the real push came in 1976.

In the Central States and East, UPS was adamant about stealing eight-hour jobs in the 1976 contract negotiations. When the contract put hoops in their way, they found ways to jump through them. In New York, full-timers were offered \$9,000 to quit. In Pennsylvania, a new HUB was built in New Stanton and Pittsburgh and Dubois full-timers were forced on the road to make room for part-timers. Parcels were diverted from the Harrisburg HUB to Philadelphia so part-timers could be hired in Philly to work the increased volume and full-timers in Harrisburg could be laid off. In anticipation of the '76 contract permitting a lower wage for part-timers, Cleveland management forced full-timers into package cars. Pittsburgh management scheduled shifts two hours apart to avoid a contract clause which prohibited back-to-back shifts for part-timers.

Part-timers are paid lower wages, get less benefits, and can be pushed harder and faster. They know they don't have to last

eight hours. But, having part-timers who do four hours worth of work in three isn't enough for UPS. Drivers who take eight hours in a day to deliver eight hours worth of packages aren't enough. Feeder drivers who pull only two trailers instead of three aren't enough.

Perhaps the most effective tool UPS has ever devised for getting workers to move faster without complaining is the incentive plan. First instituted in Los Angeles in 1974, its basic premise is simple—promise them money. Do ten hours work in eight hours and we'll let you go home in eight hours and pay you for ten, at straight time. You won't have to work overtime and you'll still make extra money. It's all lies.

Incentive drivers carry heavier and heavier loads the faster they work. Route sizes are increased. When one driver finishes his route, he's sent to help another; there is no end to overtime. Time allowances are changed without time studies. Centers switch from sheeting by pre-loader to on-route sheeting. Cashiers are fired and drivers do it themselves. For every minute a driver saves, the company finds another task to do.

In 1975, I computed Beverly Center's (Los Angeles) volume for one week and compared the number of load-hours to the number of actual hours-worked for 32 drivers. They were doing the work of 35. They were getting paid bonus money, plus overtime, but it was still less than the company would have paid if the three extra drivers had been hired and supplied with uniforms, trucks, vacation pay, health and welfare, pensions and holiday pay. Sprained ankles were common. Accidents were common. To beat the incentive, drivers were releasing packages requiring signatures, failing to sheet and deliver packages, failing to deliver mis-loads, altering volume figures, sheeting non-existent packages and skipping lunches and breaks. Runners sneered at slower drivers. Women were accused of being unable to do the work. Bets were taken on who could work the biggest loads. Management loved it. They fired the laggards, promoted the runners and drove everyone else with a whip.

When buying us off doesn't work, UPS bludgeons us. The ratio of supervisors to workers is about 1 to 10, one of the highest of any industry in the country. In Local 804, where UPS'ers are 2/3rds of the membership, the *Wall Street Journal* reported they

generated 94 percent of the local's grievances. If a person is an obstruction to the system, they are fired. Often, the discipline is capricious and arbitrary.

- ◆ Kirk Baumberger, Kentucky, was fired for mooning a supervisor, even though the practice was widespread in his HUB.

- ◆ Eleven New Jersey drivers were fired for hair and beards although the appearance standard had not been enforced for two years.

- ◆ Mac Grant of Cleveland was fired for failing to report an accident until the day after it occurred. He got his pink slip the same day he got his Big Idea with a picture of him and a letter of praise from a customer.

- ◆ A driver in Fairmont, Virginia was fired for bringing in his truck at the end of ten hours. A new division manager decided the ten-hour limit no longer existed.

- ◆ Jim Walters was fired for punching in 96 seconds late. Three people were ahead of him in line. Jim had just returned from an UPSurge meeting.

- ◆ A Harrisburg, PA sorter was fired for picking up merchandise and putting it back in its box. The company said he was stealing.

- ◆ St. Louis workers were fired when boxes on a jammed belt fell on the catwalk below them.

- ◆ Jenny Vail had been filing grievances charging harassment. She was fired for returning from break 1/100th of a second late.

- ◆ Carrol Cunningham, Louisville, KY was fired for production when he pulled 12 stops the day after he had pulled 14 with a supervisor riding beside him.

They hire 'em, harass the hell out of 'em, threaten to fire 'em and try to get them to quit. Black drivers have to work twice as hard to get their thirty days. And if you're a woman, it's even twice harder than that...

Ruby Williams
Cleveland package driver

Divided we fall

UPS is a hell-hole for everybody. It's hard to believe it could be even worse for some people, but it is. In 1977, in a city with a black population of 27.6 percent, the Cincinnati Metro HUB had only 36 black workers out of a total 285 full timers. For part-timers, the figures were worse; 9 of 88 workers were black. In spite of UPS's claim to be an equal opportunity employer, they had only hired one black full-timer in the previous seven years, the same time period in which they hired 62 white full-timers.

A fluke? Bad local management? A nation-wide company with millions of dollars to spend on attorneys doesn't make mistakes like that. Some personnel officers may be more racist than others. I was discouraged from transferring to a center which delivered in Watts, even though it was closer to my home) and some division managers may have tried harder to avoid hiring blacks and other minorities, but the bottom line is the company's racism. What can we expect from a company run by white men in a white society?

Ruby Williams puts it this way: "UPS wants it to look like they're really good in hiring blacks. You look at their magazines or anything they put out and there are always blacks in the picture. But really UPS doesn't want the drivers to get together.



You see people working side by side and they hardly know each other's name. It's racism.

"UPS calls themselves equal but they put a lot of black drivers in high crime areas. And the union does nothing about it. The union. That's something else. There are no elected union stewards in Cleveland. They're appointed by the union and they're all white. There's only one black I know of in that union hall and he's the man who mops the floor. The union doesn't stand behind blacks. Some 95% of blacks' grievances are lost.

"I honestly believe that UPS doesn't want us here. They really don't want any women either and being a black woman is worse. I've been fighting every day for five years to keep my job. UPS-urge has helped. UPSurge exposes the company and the company doesn't like being exposed. And UPSurge tries to get us fighting the company—not fighting each other."

UPS goes to great lengths to perpetuate the myth they are not racist. They dispatch blacks to white neighborhoods. Some of

them even get promoted into supervision. (Often, the racism of the company means blacks in supervision become more obnoxious and petty than white supervisors. They have to prove to the white boys upstairs they can do the job. Black workers are usually the brunt of their overzealousness; the company wants to know these Uncle Tom's are more loyal to the company than they are to their own race.) This outward show is designed to keep people from filing lawsuits and stop government agencies from stepping in and forcing an affirmative action program down their throats. But, the day-to-day reality for blacks and minorities is one of constant racist harassment, if they get hired at all.

When I delivered in Watts, it was common practice among supervisors to joke about welfare cheaters: "Might as well send that COD back, nobody out there will have any money till the county checks come." If complaints of non-delivery were received, management assumed the consignee was lying or the package had been stolen by a neighbor. When an older black driver was fired for refusing to deliver after dark, management joked: "See, even the niggers are afraid of each other."

Why does UPS care if a driver or sorter is black or white? We all have the required number of arms and legs, eyes and ears, for doing the work. Part of the answer is simple, we live in a racist society and that racism is carried into every corporation. Racism is stupid nonsense, but this stupid nonsense is believed by the men who run the company and they hire, fire and promote on that belief. But, if that were the only reason, the problem could be solved by screening out the racists in management; have blacks run the company. There is a more important reason UPS perpetuates the myths of racism—if white workers weren't divided from their black and brown co-workers, we would all be fighting the company together.

If you set up a picket line around the company demanding higher wages, but 10 or 20 percent of the workers refuse to honor your picketline do you think you'd win your strike? Every time white workers stand aside while blacks or Chicanos fight racist discrimination, they are upping the chances these minority workers will look the other way when white's come to them for help. That is exactly what the company wants.

We have a common enemy, the company. The same company

which harasses, threatens and fires blacks, fires thousands of white workers every year. The same company that won't hire blacks in Cincinnati tries to force productivity down all our throats. An unsafe UPS truck will crash regardless of the color of the driver. A package of explosive material could just as easily blow up in a white worker's face as in a black worker's. The only way we're going to beat these creeps is if we do it together.

*"Heaven help the working girl,
the goin' gets tough in this old world..."*

Norma Jean

Just as racists believe all blacks have rhythm, sexists believe all women "naturally" make good mothers. They certainly don't make good package drivers. The first known record of any woman suing UPS because they refused to hire her was the case of Alice Weber of Chicago. In 1968, she answered a newspaper ad for package drivers. Even though she fulfilled all the stated qualifications—driver's license, age, health, height—they didn't hire her. Two years later, she sued them. Apparently, UPS settled out of court. There is no record of the case appearing before a judge. About the same time, millions of women across the country were marching in the streets, demanding equal pay for equal work and equal job opportunities. The Bell Telephone System was put under a stringent affirmative action program by the federal courts. UPS got scared. Rather than face government prying into their affairs, they decided to hire women, a few.

Although documentation of this fact is hard to uncover, it is believed that the UPS affirmative action plan requires one of every four new hires be a woman. It doesn't require these women make it past their thirty days. Getting hired at UPS is like getting caught in a revolving door; round and round you go, never knowing when you'll be shoved back into the street.

When a new woman enters a center, management has one of two plans for getting rid of her. In New England, they hire a woman for Christmas, fail to train her, send her out in a P-1100 the first day and then fire her for 'inability to keep up with the work.' In Denver, they send women out at Christmas with only half the

load carried by male drivers and hope the resentment and harassment of the men will drive the woman into quitting. A young woman came into Beverly Center one day, her first on the job. She read programmed learning texts in the morning and after lunch, was sent out in a P-800 into the garment district, a maze of narrow alleys and 20-story buildings without elevators. By five o'clock, she was back in the building, handing over her browns. "I quit," she told the manager. "I am not an animal." She had loaded over 500 pieces in less than four hours and when she had called in at her last stop, the manager told her to pick up 200 more.

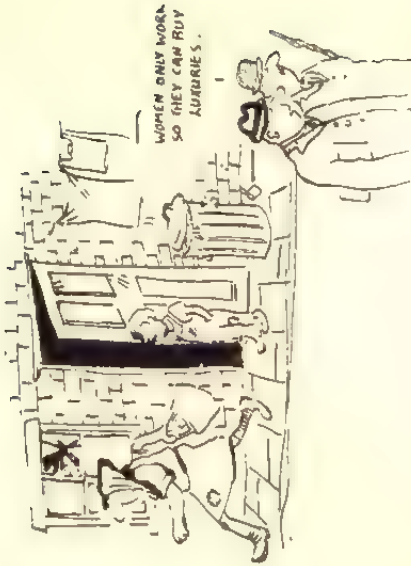
Sexual advances, jokes, harassment and insensitivity are the hallmarks of UPS's affirmative action policy. Evie Thomas, a driver in San Bruno, CA, was told to cut her hair. The day after it had been shortened to just below her ears, she was fired for having hair that was "too long." Men in the center were sporting wavy locks down to their shoulders. A Verdugo Center, CA, driver, only five months on the job and under constant threat of firing for production, found a lump in her breast. When she asked for time off to see a doctor, her manager refused. A Cleveland driver was fired twice; once for having the wrong color of soles on her shoes, another time for not having *both* hands on the wheel while shifting gears. In St. Louis, a woman was hired to load trailers, but they expected her to do four a shift while the men did three. She was fired for being too slow.

Women who do survive the first thirty days, often find themselves pressured to do more than the men just to prove they're equal. When they refuse, they are accused of not being able to keep up. The harassment of management is compounded by the skepticism or outright hostility of their fellow drivers. This double-bind which faces every woman is based on the myth women are weaker than men. A society which believes women belong in the home taking care of children, rather than out making decisions about how the world is run, must find justification for maintaining this charade. Weakness is a good one. Tell men they are superior because they are so big and tough. Tell women they are inferior because they are so delicate and fragile. When women realize men are making all the money and demand the same jobs, you can kick them off the trucks and send them back home by "proving" they are incapable of hard physical labor.

Women aren't weak, and never have been. Is a mother who carries a ten pound bag of groceries and a 35-pound two-year old up three flights of stairs weak? Is a nurse who has to lift 200 pound patients in and out of hospital beds weak? Weakness is taught us. When we come to UPS, it may be the first manual labor we have ever done. It takes getting used to, and some training, but hundreds of us have done it. We aren't weak anymore. Is it weakness to refuse to pull 200 stops a day? Is it weakness to refuse to run? Is it weakness to load 150 pounds on a handtruck you'll have to pull up stairs? No, that's sanity.

When I had my employment interview, Larry Fagan of Los Angeles personnel seemed very concerned about my personal life. "Who's going to cook dinner if you work overtime? What will you do with the children if they get sick? Will it bother your husband to have you working around a lot of other men?" Looking back, I know Larry didn't give three cents for my personal life, he just wanted to make sure nothing would stand in the way of my showing up every morning and staying until long after the sun went down. Most women hold down two jobs, one at UPS where they get paid and one at home, where they don't. Management knows this. They also know most of us care a lot more about our job at home than about our job at UPS. But, they have all the hole cards, our paychecks. They are determined to dangle that paycheck in front of us like a carrot, making us feel grateful for the chance to work, and then threaten to take it away everytime our responsibilities as wife and mother get in their way. If we complain, they tell us to go home where we belong and stay there.

Women, like men, work because they have to. Over half the working women in this country are single heads-of-households, raising children on their own. The others work because their husband's paycheck is not enough to keep up with rising inflation. Like men, we are constantly exploited at work. Unlike men, we must also face a hostile world which believes us incapable of any work which isn't simple-minded, repetitious and related in some way to our "natural" abilities as mothers. If we stick to women's work, teaching, waitressing, nursing, clerking, we are paid paltry wages based on the assumption that's all our talents are worth. When we go after the big money, the kind truck drivers make, we are accused of stealing work from men and being "unsuited."



*"...out in Detroit here's what they found
and out in Frisco here's what they found,
and out in Pittsburgh here's what they found,
and down at Bethlehem, here's what they found.
That if you don't let redbaiting break you up,
if you don't let stool pigeons break you up,
if you don't let vigilantes break you up,
and if you don't let race-hatred break you up—
You'll win—what I mean take it easy—but take it."*

Talkin' Union

Lee Hays, Millard Lampell, Pete Seeger

Is anyone on our side?

A class of driving rookies was being given the usual company fairy tale about how UPS got where they are today: "In 1953, UPS decided to apply for common carrier status, but we knew if we did (this personnel man always talked as though the company belonged to him) we'd be going into competition with the Post Office. They're subsidized and we'd have to keep our rates low in order to compete. We went to the Teamsters and explained our problem and asked if they could give us some help. They agreed."

And help the Teamsters did. In Los Angeles, the union had already agreed to the incentive plan and, in fact, thought it was such a good thing Local 396 president Gene Raasch told me that if UPS tried to get rid of it, the union would fight them. "It's good for people," Raasch said with a straight face. "It makes them want to work." In Cleveland, the company attorney, Bernard Goldfarb also rents office space and even sells supplies to the Teamsters Health and Welfare Fund. When an illegal panel

The enemy of women UPS'ers is the same as that of men—the company. If we fight, and get an end to forced overtime so we'll have time at the end of the day to enjoy our children, men will benefit too. If we fight, and get childcare facilities paid for by the company, men can bring their children there also. If we win the right to wear long hair and jewelry, so do men. But, women are less likely to get these things if men aren't cheering them on. Common enemy, common fight; either we all struggle together, or we all go down together.

Blacks are a different color from whites. Women are not the same sex as men. On these things, we are different. But, we are all human beings and, as human beings, we are equal and have the same rights; the right to a decent life free from the dangers of injury and disease, the right to some time to ourselves and the energy to enjoy it, the right to a good home, healthy children, a few pleasures now and then. UPS is taking those things away from us. Their vicious system threatens everyday to strip away our last few shreds of humanity and transform us into robots. Are we going to let them get away with it just because we'd rather nit-pick over the small things which make us different, than discover and relish the one thing which makes us all the same?

of management and union officials met in Oakland and overturned Local 70's 8 am start-time, the International refused to listen to the protests of the local's secretary-treasurer because they had made a deal—if UPS would build the new HUB in 70's jurisdiction, the union would give away the 8 a.m. start-time. When New York Local 804 began a long, bitter strike in 1974 over the protection of full-time jobs, the International refused to sanction the pickets sent to New Jersey. Local 177 workers were forced to cross the picket-line, one of them killing an 804 picket as the scab wheeled his feeder through the line.

When Western Pennsylvania went on strike in 1973, the International waited three weeks before giving them sanction and benefits. When UPS opened operations in Utah in 1975, the union gave the company one year of "free" time before negotiating a contract; they did the same in Toronto.

The list of union contract sell-outs, lost grievances and collusion with management is long and disgusting. We've all seen it happen. Every newspaper in the country has carried front page stories of corruption in the Central States Pension Fund, the violent raids on the farmworkers, union ties with organized crime and the killing of dissident members, even their own Jimmy Hoffa. Union democracy is a farce. We get shouted down, threatened, kicked out of the hall and go for weeks, sometimes months, without ever seeing the white belt of a business agent. Are they all thugs and incompetents? Is somebody buying them off?

Although some union officials are crooks, thugs, and bribe-takers, that isn't their worst problem. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Warehousemen and Helpers from the Executive Board down to the business agents in the locals believe the company has a right to its enormous profits. It is the union's job, according to Fitzsimmons, to win a few benefits for the members, but never to imperil the companies' balance sheet. The union's philosophy is best expressed by Dave Beck, International president until he was sent to prison for tax evasion. "I run this office like a business," Beck said while still in the Marble Palace in Washington, D.C. "...just like an oil company or a railroad. We use business-like methods. Business people have confidence in us. Why should truck drivers and bottle washers be allowed to make decisions affecting union policy?" Is it any wonder we have

no democracy in the union? Is it any wonder these officials force rotten contracts down our throats?

"The adverse affects of these strikes," said UPS's annual report of the 1976 contract strikes, "has prompted the Teamsters and UPS to consider more constructive format for future negotiations that will avoid hardship to our customer, our people and the public." *Business Week*, in their report on the Eastern strike, wrote, "National bargaining would simplify UPS labor relations...and eliminate the possibility of a strike in one region crippling the national operation." We will have a national contract this year not because the union believes it will strengthen our bargaining position against the company and open up the potential of a national strike (the last thing Fitzsimmons wants) but because UPS wants a national contract so they can force the same rotten conditions on everybody. Neither the union or the company believes the rank and file is well-enough organized nationwide to mount the same kind of offensive we did in 1976 in the Central States and East. Although we had the power to force those strikes, we did not have the power to win. We still don't. The union toadies, driving their big Cadillacs and merrily spending their hundred-thousand dollar a year salaries feel pretty secure. The company knows it has a friend on the other side of the bargaining table. But, in the backs of their minds, they worry about us.

While the bureaucracy of the union has incredible power-imposing trusteeship on dissident locals, refusing strike sanction, bombing grievances—it only has that power because it has a membership. Without us, there would be no dues to collect and embezzle, there would be no pension fund to rip off. They know that what they saw in 1976 is only a glimpse of what it is possible for us to do. The company knows it, too. Without us, packages don't move.

Rochester's UPS'ers walked off the job twice in the last year. In January, 1978, drivers held a two-hour "coffee break" to discuss unresolved grievances over supervisors doing union work and excessive overtime. They were all suspended for two days. But, management stopped hustling packages and overtime decreased. By July 21, they were on the street again, this time for several hours. Constant harassment by a night supervisor forced the sorters and loaders out. When drivers arrived, they stayed

out. Even though warning letters and suspensions were issued, night workers later reported that the supervisor in question, one J.C., was a changed man: "It was *almost* a pleasure to come to work after the walk-out."

In Philadelphia, Division Manager Gary Pinder's refusal to return a confiscated personal notebook forced drivers out for an hour and a half August 15, 1978. The local union President (a former driver) who called the walk-out, was fired, but Pinder was also given a two-week "vacation." When UPS sued Local 623 for \$100,000 because of the wildcat, workers discussed walking out again. New Jersey drivers walked out for four days because of an arbitrary change in start-time. Members only returned to work after Fitzsimmons threatened to take away the local's charter.

There are other stories like this. Some have happy endings. If they don't, it's usually because the union stabbed the workers in the back. The 1976 contracts were accepted even though thousands of UPS'ers picketed against them, voted against them and struck against them. Every HUB has its militant worker who has been fired unfairly, never to return. When we are defeated, the union tells us it's our own fault, we should have let them handle it. The company exploits the defeat as an example to everyone why we shouldn't fight back. We know better. Defeats are not our fault. One individual person doesn't have much of a chance against a corporate giant and a union bureaucracy. An individual local will have a hard time staving off a concerted attack against it. One region can strike, and hurt the system, but one region can't shut the mother down.

UPSurge, the national UPS workers organization, was formed for the sole purpose of trying to bring together every UPS'er in the country into a democratic, militant group to insist our union represent our demands and to force the company to get off our backs. Having UPSurge has meant more victories, but a war has many skirmishes and winning a little one here and a little one there and, not winning the big battles, can cause people to look for the easy way out.

Eugene Debs, a great labor leader in the early years of this century, once told a meeting of workers, "If I can lead you into the promised land, somebody else can lead you out." We know Frank Fitzsimmons won't lead us to the promised land, but, many of us believe another official can. Jimmy Hoffa's dead;

forget him. Harold Gibbons? He hasn't been seen in the St. Louis HUB since the last time he came down to break a wildcat strike. Roy Williams? He forced an end to the last Central States strike. There is no great leader waiting to come forth and lead us out of the jungle.

When there is no hope of finding a decent International president, some of us turn our sights lower and hope the election of honest local officials will make a difference. Denver's Local 435 has elected a new leadership. The president is a member of PROD, a rank and file group organized to get union reform. The new UPS business agent is a member of UPSurge. Since coming into office, they have doubled the number of elected stewards and established alternate stewards. The business agent has cracked down on people working off the clock. In the local's contract proposals, the membership voted to support the UPSurge contract demands and the business agent has tried to carry these to the International. The new officials have personal phone calls from Frank Fitzsimmons warning them to back off on filing charges against members who scabbed during a Denver grocery strike. Their representative to the Chicago grievance panel was intimidated by goons. There are rumors the local may end up in trusteeship.

Can these Denver men change things? If they don't, it won't be because they didn't try. They are honest, sincere reformers. But, they were elected by a membership which was too sick of the old leadership to put up with it anymore and wanted to have faith somebody else could do a better job. Not everyone who voted for these men is a member of a reform group. Many of them don't want to be; they're afraid of reprisals from their company, or worse, that the groups are controlled by communists and socialists and they, too, will be branded as reds. The movement to elect the new Denver leadership was not based on a common understanding of how the union should be run or how the company should be fought, it was a movement motivated by disgust.

What will these new officials tell the membership when they begin losing all their grievances because the union is trying to force them back into the official fold? What do they tell the membership if the local is thrown into trusteeship? What happens if even one of them, worried about keeping his union position, goes over to the side of the International? The pressure on

union officials is horrendous. They have to keep both the company and the union off their backs. If they don't have behind them a united rank and file, a rank and file aware of all the dangers but still willing to take the chances, they will either give up in frustration or accept the path of least resistance. It is usually a no-win situation.

We can't afford to lose. Our lives are on the line. The only people we can count on are ourselves. We know we are capable of it. The 1976 contract campaign—600 people in Indianapolis, more hundreds at the pre-contract rallies, thousands on the picket lines, wildcaters in eight cities—was organized by UPSurge, the truck drivers Dave Beck said should never be allowed to run a union. In Louisville and Buffalo, employees have set up a defense fund in which regular contributions from every driver are used to offset the lost pay of anybody who is victimized. That means people are less fearful of putting their jobs on the line because they have less to lose when they do it. In Denver, two young drivers, using funds from their own pockets and information they got from other UPSurges, started the ball rolling on a local-wide petition campaign which defeated the company's plan to force the incentive plan on them.

Sometime, like in the case of feeder driver David Ely, we use the government agencies. Ely filed charges against UPS with the National Labor Relations Board because he was harassed for talking "unauthorized stops"—the man had to piss. With the help of attorneys from PROD, Ely eventually won his case. UPSurge used attorneys to fight company harassment of activists passing out newspapers and literature at work. The case was finally won, forcing the company to post a notice promising to stop interfering with organized efforts.

Occupational Safety and Health inspector James Standley cited the Harrisburg HUB for blocking aiseways with packages, not having enough fire extinguishers and hoses, poor lighting and improper ventilation and equipment in an area where trucks were painted. The company was fined several thousand dollars. The Los Angeles woman who quit because her manager refused to give her time off to have a lump in her breast examined, got help from the American Cancer Society and won her job back.

But for almost every victory at the labor board or OSHA, there are defeats. In New Stanton, UPS was fined a measly

\$1440 for telling employees to climb metal chutes, putting parcels in walkways and not having proper safety guards on fluorescent lights. Many OSHA inspections are made with management toadies walking at the inspector's side, diverting him from actually talking with the workers. The courts and the labor board too often side with management against us. The Interstate Commerce Commission, even though workers testified that the lifting of the 100-pound aggregate limit would increase safety hazards, granted UPS's request.

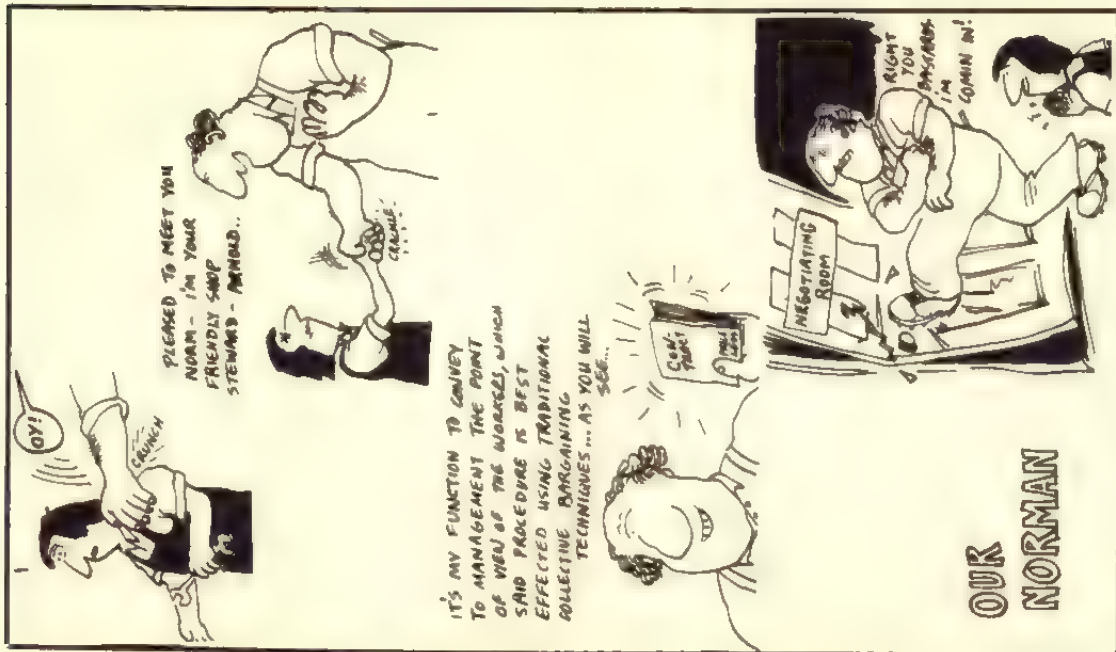
We don't need fairweather friends in government or the union. We need an uncompromising ally who'll fight every battle win or lose, never let company profits stand in the way of workers safety and health and refuse to be side-tracked by offers of promotion, bribed by a promise to solve only some people's problems or bought off with vague commitments to "look into it."

Can a local president verbally abuse the company into stopping productivity schemes? No. Can OSHA stop the mangling of arms by slapping UPS's hands? No. We can do these things, though. We can stop working. UPS can't make profits if the belts don't run and the trucks aren't driven. Since we run the belts and drive the trucks, we are the only ones with the power to shut UPS down. We only have each other and our ability to strike.

UPSurge should be our first line of defense. Vince Meredith, the chief steward in Louisville, Kentucky, put it this way to the national UPSurge meeting held in Cincinnati in November, 1978: "There are only two ways I know of to beat the Big Brown Machine. One is a national contract, and two is togetherness—UPSurge, me and you, whatever you can do. There were many things accomplished in the last contract, maybe you didn't realize it. The main thing we showed the company was we can stick together. We're unified."

The spring—April 30, 1979—UPSers face another contract battle. The company wants productivity clauses in the contract. They already have them in operation in some areas. UPSurge is leading the fight against the productivity clauses. UPSurge is also fighting for a return to the eight hour day, for a decent grievance procedure, for an end to the military dress code, for equality for part timers and much more. A lot is at stake.

UPSurge was founded as—and it continues to be—a rank and



file organization. It's strength is in the HUB, amongst ordinary workers like you and me. It is open to any UPS worker who is willing to work with other UPS workers, on a basis of equality, to fight the company. Both the union and the company charge that UPSurge is "communist," but it is not. That is just the strongest way that the supervisors can make it known that they hate UPSurge. Socialists did in fact help to start UPSurge. And that's a good thing. Socialists believe in building rank and file organizations. They believe in workers' rights. They have always played an important role in the rank and file movement. They helped organize the first unions, they led the fight for the eight hour day in the first place. They even led the great strike in Minneapolis in 1934 which got the Teamsters union going as a major force. But UPSurge is not socialist. It is just what it says it is—a rank and file workers' organization.

UPSurge also supports union reform. There are few things more important today than regaining union democracy—throwing out the goons, the dictators, the petty tyrants and incompetents. UPSurge members are involved. They also support the efforts of reform groups, such as PROD and Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). Unity of all Teamsters is needed. But UPSurge must make the HUB it's base, it's place of strength, not the offices down at the union hall. The unions today are largely business machines that long ago stopped fighting seriously in the interests of the workers. And this is true even of the more democratic unions. More often than not, they actually side with the companies and the government against their own members—stopping wildcat strikes, enforcing rotten contracts, bargaining away right after right.

Union democracy is important, but it's not enough. To make the union fight in our interests, we must build on the shop floor. We must organize independently of the union bureaucrats. In the union, but independent. We need an organization that will fight for us when the union won't. And not just at contract time. UPSurge can be that organization, but only if we build it. UPSurge can be the real voice of working UPSers, the UPSers who are out there fighting, who know what's happening, what the conditions are, what the company is trying to do, what the workers think. Because they are there. The man in the union hall, no matter how dedicated and sincere, can never be a replacement for UPSurge.

"We try to operate a democratic company. We want to be a living, breathing institution and not a cold, inanimate, impersonal corporation. We try to avoid needless formalities in our relation with each other. We think of each other as individuals and not as mechanical parts of a machine."

Jim Casey—1952

Who are these guys?

In 1978, UPS made \$75 million in profit from a delivery income of \$2,800 million. And that was a bad year. In 1975, the first year of transcontinental operations, after tax income totaled \$90.7 million on a delivery income of \$1,600 million. Since 1968, when the big push to cover the country began, delivery income has risen 579 percent and after tax income has risen 275 percent. Anyway you slice it, UPS is a money-maker.

Also in 1978, UPS delivered more parcels than the Post Office for the first time in history, 1.3 billion brown boxes. This victory over its primary competitor was made even sweeter when the Interstate Commerce Commission lifted the 100-pound daily aggregate limit on shipments from a single shipper, opening the way for UPS to go after over 25 percent of the shipments now carried by other trucking companies. A judge in the U.S. District court in Philadelphia ruled that the reduction of postal rates implemented by the Post Office in order to attract large shippers away from UPS presented such a danger to UPS's profits that the Post Office would not be allowed to lower its rates. "We cannot find that

damage to the Postal Service is a factor which outweighs damage to UPS," the ruling said. Just as UPS drove Railway Express into bankruptcy in 1976, they are now well on the way to eliminating the Post Office from the parcel business. If anybody in this country is going to ship a package under 50 pounds, they'll have to do it in a little brown van.

Until 1970, UPS was an invisible giant. It employed no public relations firm. It did no advertising. The only financial information about the company was buried in the archives of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission, but even those records gave an incomplete picture. Because UPS does not offer its stock for sale to the general public, it does not have to justify itself to anybody but bankers. In 1962, a reporter trying to break the veil of secrecy was told "Come back when we have the whole country sewed up and not before." The bigwigs on the Board of Directors are not allowed to be photographed, except by the Big Idea. They do not have listings in *Who's Who*, the directory of everybody who's anybody in America. In 1975, it took the New York newspapers four months to discover the corporate offices had been moved out of Manhattan and into Greenwich, Conn. Why this mania for privacy? What are they trying to hide?

UPS wants to be a monopoly. They want to be the biggest, and only trucking company handling small freight. Since acquiring ICC rights as a common carrier in 1953, they have been slowly spreading themselves across the country (and around the world, with operations now in Canada and Germany). If their plan was to succeed, it had to be done quietly, no fanfare, no horn tooting. Other trucking companies, themselves anxious to gain control of the lucrative parcel business, must not know how UPS did it, or they could apply the same methods to their own operations and threaten UPS's position as number one. Now, when there is almost no competition left, when no other company can even hope to match UPS for rates, service and speed, the closet doors have been let ajar, not opened wide, but just enough to leak out the information needed to win the battle against the Post Office.

In 1978, UPS was the largest trucking company in the world and the fourth largest transportation company in the country. Only Trans World Airways, United Airlines and the Union Pacific Railroad were larger. Consolidated Freightways, ranked number

17 by *Fortune Magazine*, was the only trucking company which could come even close to matching UPS for size and total dollars in operating revenue (the money made from sale of goods or services). Better still, UPS could return to its investors (management personnel) \$17.90 for every \$100 they had invested in the company. One share of UPS stock in 1977 was worth over \$20.00, seven dollars more than it was worth just 4 years earlier. For every \$100 UPS earned in 1978, about \$6.00 was kept as profit, a 34 percent increase over 1969. And UPS is crying the blues because profit is down from 1975, its record year-to-date.

During the time UPS's profit was growing 275 percent, our wages were rising about 130 percent, just slightly faster than the rate of inflation. While volume was increasing at a clip well over 300 percent, the number of employees was growing about 150 percent. In 1969, drivers were about 40 percent of the workforce. While an average full-time worker was making about \$19,000 last year, Harold Oberkötter, Chairman of the Board raked in over \$120,000, in 1977 and received dividends of approximately \$155,200 on almost 400,000 shares of stock—worth nearly \$7 million. Old Man Casey's stock is worth over \$25 million. When profits were computed in 1977, over \$30 million of that, 38 percent, was returned directly to the stockholders, about 8,000 supervisors and management personnel, in the form of stock awards, incentive bonuses and dividends. We don't know what happened to the other \$40 million or so. We know we didn't get any of it.

So what does all this mean to us? When UPS makes \$2.8 billion in one year (1978), how much of that do we get? And, when profits fall, as they did in 1976 after two major strikes, or are depressed, as 1977 and 1978 when rates did not rise as fast as operating costs, what will happen to us?

UPS makes money by delivering parcels (and by selling real estate to itself through its subsidiary SPC Corporation). To deliver parcels requires a certain outlay in buildings, trucks, paper, fuel and other items known as operating costs. In 1976, just as an example since it was a bad year for profits, 59.5 cents of every \$1.00 was used to pay hourly employees wages and fringe benefits, 9.5 cents paid supervision, 29.6 cents paid other operating costs, 4 cents was reinvested and 1.0 cents was paid in dividends. These ratios have remained fairly stable over the last few years,

wages always being the biggest chunk of operating costs. In fact, employee expense, wages and benefits, as a percent of operating costs has only risen 4.8 percent since 1969.)

UPS doesn't always have control over operating costs like fuel and trucks. These prices are determined by the companies who supply UPS. They also don't have total control over what rates they can charge for the delivery of packages. Because of competition with the Post Office for control of parcels they have to keep their rates close to subsidized postal rates. The Interstate Commerce Commission must also approve any rate increase. In 1976 and 77, they granted increases of only about half what UPS wanted. When operating costs rise and rates don't, profits decline. Even though volume in 1977 and 1978 was substantially higher than 1975, net income for those two years, 81.5 million and 75 million, was below the 90.7 million of 1975.

The one area over which UPS has almost total control (because it has the cooperation of the union) is wages and productivity. Using UPS's operating figures for 1977, a two percent raise in productivity, a very conservative growth rate, would increase profits by 20 percent. If productivity could be raised 10 percent, profits would double. This, of course, assumes that no other costs will go up. That isn't realistic. We all understand that. But since it's even less realistic to believe the cost of fuel will go down or construction costs will fall, UPS is still left with only one way to stop its declining profits—take it off our hides. But, let them tell it their way: "The opposition of shipper groups to increases in our rates, and the delays in securing commission approval, make it clear that we cannot count on future rate increases alone to help us absorb the continuing rising costs of labor, materials and supplies. We must continue and accelerate our efforts to absorb as much as possible of these rising operating costs by tighter control and further improvement in our operating effectiveness." (author's italics)

UPS wants a productivity clause in the national contract. Because the union believes in UPS's right to make millions in profit, they will want to give it to them. Profits, the union tells us, are what make the system work. We must protect profits. If the company doesn't make a profit, it can't grow. If it doesn't grow, we will be thrown out of work. Over and over again, they try to tell us that we're all in this together, we share a common interest in the future of UPS. Do we? We work harder, the company's

profits rise. We work harder, more of us are killed, maimed and driven mad by the unending over-time and the continuous harassment. We work harder, Oberkotter makes more millions and we still struggle to get from Friday to Friday.

Harold Oberkotter, his big brother Paul, Old Man Casey, and all those others on the Board of Directors own and control UPS and its billions. Joe Duzy, East Center L.A. manager, with his piddly number of shares and his coat and tie, has no more to say about what happens in that company than you or I. But he's been given some power to abuse and the promise of big money, so he'll crack that whip harder and harder and bleed brown when he's stabbed in the back for failing to raise production. He has an interest in higher profits. We have none.

OH NO - THEY'RE ALL PULLING
TOGETHER !



*"They haven taken untold millions
that they never toiled to earn,
But without our brain and muscle
not a single wheel would turn;*

*...In our hands is placed a power
greater than their hoarded gold,
greater than the might of atoms
magnified a thousand fold:
We can bring to birth a new world
from the ashes of the old."*

Solidarity Forever
Ralph Chaplin

A world to win

Every box we lift, every mile we drive produces profit for UPS. There would be no millions if we didn't work, but our wages are only a tiny fraction of those millions. We must fight tooth and nail and put our jobs, and our lives, on the line for even an ounce of human comfort. Jim Casey does nothing and in return, he lives in comfort and security, never knowing what it's like to scrounge for a new pair of shoes or worry about making next month's car payment. "Life," Jimmy Carter tells us, "is unfair." Is it? Is it life which is unfair, or is it a system based on profit, and not on fulfilling human needs?

UPS is part of the capitalist system. Capitalism is inhuman, unequal, undemocratic and irrational. The drive for profits means

125,000 American workers are killed on the job every year. That's inhuman. No matter how many times a year we vote, the real decisions—how much food will be produced, how much medical care will cost, whether automobiles will be safe or blow up on impact—are made by the tiny handful who own and control the factories, banks and government. That's undemocratic. Even if we sacrifice our wages for the "good of the country," or send our sons and lovers to "fight for freedom" it is *they* who live in luxury and they who have us to go to war. That's inequality.

Two billions of the world's people are malnourished, one-eighth of the population is starving to death, and yet millions of gallons of milk are dumped into rivers and farmers are paid not to plant crops. Is that rational?

We are told by the newspapers, television, books and movies that some people are just smarter than others, have more on the ball. There aren't many of them, but the ones there are should be in charge. They should be rewarded by society for their initiative and vision. The rest of us must be content with what we get. Isn't it strange that all of these people with initiative and vision went to prestigious universities costing thousands of dollars a year? Grew up knowing they would run Ford Motor Company because Daddy was the president of the board? Were willing to step on anybody who got in the way of their climb up the ladder? Never did anything more complicated than calling a stock broker and telling them to sell, buy or hold?

Human beings, they tell us, are greedy, violent and selfish. But only if they are workers. Did they call Jim Casey greedy when he set out to take total control of parcel delivery? No, that was enterprising. Did they call Lyndon Johnson violent when he ordered the bombing of Haiphong Harbor, or Harry S. Truman when he ordered the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima? No, that was "in the interests of democracy." But when blacks in Watts and Newark released the pent up rage of 400 years of oppression and destroyed the white businesses which rip them off, that was violence. When thousands of miners left the mines demanding the right to walk-off unsafe jobs and a decent wage, that was greed.

If capitalism is the best these people of initiative and vision can do, then perhaps it is time to get rid of these people and their system and replace it with something else, a system where the first

priority is the health and happiness of every individual, regardless of birth, intelligence or ability. They have made such a bundle of everything—the system, they scream, is "in crisis"—perhaps we should have a go at it. We can't do worse.

Socialism. The word strikes terror in the hearts of "free men." Socialism, we have been told since first grade, means totalitarian dictatorship, mass poverty, torture for those who disagree, the destruction of individuality and creative talent, and only one kind of deodorant on the grocery shelf instead of 17. Private property won't exist. Voting will be a meaningless farce.

This sordid picture has been painted vividly in our history books and newspapers. But, the picture is not of socialism. What we are told is socialism—Russia, China, Cuba—is really another form of capitalism. There was a workers' revolution in Russia in 1917. The result was freedom on a scale unprecedented in human history. Workers ran their own factories. Peasants took over the great estates of the aristocracy. Women won equality. National minorities won self-determination. Prior to the October Revolution, Russia was called the "prison-house of nations," because of the enslavement of Poles, Estonians, Latvians, Finns, etc., in the Russian Empire. They all won freedom.

The Russian Revolution was isolated, however. Workers' revolutions did not spread into the powerful industrial nations of Central and Eastern Europe as Lenin and Trotsky hoped. The German Revolution of 1919 was defeated. Imperialist armies, including those of the United States, invaded the young workers' republic. They were driven off, but the price was devastating. And in a ruined, war-torn country, the revolution was lost. Stalin came to power and began the systematic destruction of everything the workers had achieved.

Today, there is no freedom in Russia—not for anyone except the bosses and bureaucrats. Eastern Europe is once again a "prison house of nations." Women face discrimination in everything they do. Workers are denied even the most basic rights—the right to strike, the right to free trade unions, the right to free speech. The state, through the bureaucracy and the Communist Party, controls the economy and runs it much the same way any capitalist corporation is run, to create profit for a few, using the labor of many. The only difference between Russia and the United States is in form—one makes a pretense of democracy, the

other doesn't. The content is the same—economic slavery for millions, discrimination, oppression.

Revolutionary socialism, bringing to birth "a new world from the ashes of the old," is based on three principles: social control of the means of production, equality, and workers' democracy. Socialism seeks to bring all of society's productive powers, its ability to produce food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and pleasure, under the direct control of ordinary people. Distribution of goods would be based not on one man or one company's ability to make a profit, but on the needs of human beings. The necessities, enough food, warmth, clothing, health care, transportation, would be free. What we call luxuries today, music lessons for the children, sports equipment, boats, stereos, television, art works, would be provided free through the educational system owned cooperatively by a neighborhood or factory or city or could be purchased by individuals. Private personal property would still exist. But the property which produces societies wealth—the steel mills, auto factories, dairy farms, and oil wells—would be owned collectively by everyone.

This type of ownership would make it possible to plan production to avoid waste or shortages and, at the same time, make sure all efforts are made to protect natural resources and the environment. If nuclear power were too dangerous, as the disaster at the Three Mile Island plant shows it is, it would not be used. If a medicine produced severe side effects, it would not be used. The health and safety of human beings would always be the first consideration.

A socialist society also means equality not sameness: that is another lie the present rulers try to put over on us. The differences among people would be recognized, but the reward for each individual's contribution would be equal. No longer would some talents be highly rewarded while others are ignored. And no talent would be left to wither and die because there was no money to pay for lessons or materials or education. A socialist society needs the contribution of each and every member regardless of what that contribution is. Human beings are capable of incredible invention and creation if given free rein: socialism would allow the flowering of every talent. There would not be great wealth for some and poverty for many. The wealth of society would be available for all.



The third principle of socialism is worker's democracy—those who make decisions would be directly accountable to those whom they affect. We could control decision making, rather than our current structure, where unknown men hidden in corporate offices decide when we can piss, when we can eat and when we can sleep and where elected officials we see only once every four years when they come asking for our vote junket around the world and make life and death decisions regardless of the consequences to us. Workers' councils, bodies of workers elected by their work-mates at each factory and in each industry, would make decisions about how fast and how many of an item to produce. If the workers did not like their representatives, they would have the right of immediate recall. Council members would make no more than any other worker and would not be taken from the workplace and installed in carpeted, air conditioned offices where they would forget what it's like on the shop floor. Technical experts, industrial engineers, scientists, computer experts and others, could be under the direction of the workers council. They would not make decisions, but would devise the best way for accomplishing the decisions made by workers.

From each worker's council, delegates to city, state, national and international councils would be elected. They would also be subject to immediate recall and make no more than any other worker. They would be joined by delegates from neighborhood committees, consumers cooperatives, women's organizations, and black and minority organizations in making decisions about housing, child-care, education, culture and the protection of equal rights for racial, sexual and cultural minorities. Everyone, workers, farmers, the elderly, children, would have their say.

Sounds great, you say, but it will never work. But think again. Workers' councils are not something dreamed up in a professor's head. The first worker's councils were created by workers themselves during the Paris Commune in 1871. Since then, workers in Russia in 1905 and 1917, Spain in the 1930's, Hungary in 1956, and Portugal in 1974 have all developed some form of worker's councils as part of their revolutions. These revolutions have not been successful, but they show what is possible. They show the potential power of workers, their ability to organize, to decide democratically, their capacity to fight. More than any other single force, it was the oil workers of Iran who overthrew the hated

Shah, despite the fact that he and his generals had all the best military hardware money could buy. Ordinary workers shut down the oil fields; other workers did the same in offices, banks, factories. Will they now be able to take control of Iran for themselves? Only time will tell. But if they don't, they will face new repression, this time from Khomeini himself, or from the army which still waits in the wings.

Iran is far away of course, but not so far as it used to seem. Today there is just one world economic system; oil production and distribution shows that. The system is in crisis. The United States is still the strongest link in the capitalist chain, but the crisis which is leading to mass starvation in Africa, and revolution in Iran, will be felt here. It already is—in declining real wages, permanent inflation, chronic unemployment, three recessions in ten years. UPS workers still make a good wage, but they pay a price for it. And more and more UPSers are part time workers. But what if something goes wrong, what if you are injured? Or if you just can't stand the pace? Or you want to see you family a little more? You might just find yourself depending on an unemployment check. Possibly welfare. And what about your children? What is the future for them?

There is no blue print for a socialist society. We know, from the past struggles of the working class, what the major components of such a society would be. But we can't, and shouldn't look for a rule book. Workers' control also means workers developing their own solutions, their own organizations, and their own structures. A blue print imposed from above would only result in another form of tyranny.

"Socialism is about human beings, and human beings make mistakes," wrote British journalist and socialist Paul Foot in his book, *Why You Should Be a Socialist*. "There will be plenty of mistakes made by a workers democracy, plenty of wrong decisions taken, plenty of cases where the wrong things are made at the wrong time and distributed to the wrong place.

"No one can guarantee against jealousy or ineptness or pain. Socialism only provides the structure in which men and women can cooperate to make their mistakes right; to curb their jealousies in the common interest and to relieve pain wherever it exists."

Socialism will not be easy. Society will not be transformed

overnight simply because we will it to be. But, Socialism is a real possibility, not a utopian dream. The resources to feed and clothe all the world's children are here now. Our decision is whether we continue to let those resources be controlled by a tiny minority interested only in increasing their own bloody wealth, or take things into our hands, and create a society in which no human being wants for anything.

The road to socialism is not easy either. Capitalism is a mighty power. Even though its foundations are being shaken today, it is not about to fall. The need for socialism has existed since capitalism came into existence, but wishing doesn't make things so. To achieve socialism, the desire for it, and the means to get it, socialist ideas must be built up person by person, country by country, until the movement for revolution stirs in every house, factory and office in the world.

The last decade has seen explosion after explosion of working class discontent—France in 1968, Italy in 1969, Chile in 1970, Portugal in 1974, Iran today. But in the United States, the heartland of world capitalism, the socialism movement is tiny and weak. Nevertheless, socialism is relevant here, more so than ever before.

Ann Mackie, the editor of UPSurge, explained it this way: "I helped start UPSurge because I believe UPS workers have to be united. We have to have an organization to help us fight back. We simply can't take on this company one by one—not and have any hope of winning.

"I am 100% dedicated to UPSurge, but that isn't the end of the story. There is a whole world of UPS's out there. And a whole world of people like us—coal miners, teachers, farm workers, postal workers, typists, janitors, waitresses, autoworkers—people who fight every day against companies and bosses just like ours. And the whole system in this country is designed to make it easier for the bosses, harder for us. That's why teachers go to jail, just because they want a living wage. And that's why Jimmy Carter, Taft-Hartley, all the courts, the national guard, and even the local cops were thrown in to help the coal companies beat back the miners. In 1976, all UPS had to do was snap a finger and the police were down with court orders banning us from picketing.

"UPS is not an exception, not in the trucking industry and not



in the country. It's just a little ahead of the rest. UPS is really a model company. It makes millions for its owners and that is what companies are supposed to do. The more the better. If you want to understand how capitalism works, how this system works, just think about UPS and how we are treated. It will tell you just about as much as reading Karl Marx.

"I want to change the system. It should be a crime to treat people the way UPS treats its employees. I think socialism is the only alternative. There aren't many socialists today, not in the United States anyway. The whole socialist tradition in this country, which originated in the working class, which helped lead American workers to some of their greatest triumphs, was smashed in the 1950's. There used to be tens of thousands of socialist workers—yes, here in America—but they were driven out of the unions by people like Joseph McCarthy, with the help of the gangsters who have reduced our unions to businesses—dues collecting agencies.

"But times are changing. I think UPSers can see this. I think UPS workers should think again about why it is that UPS can do the things it does. I think UPS workers should consider socialism as an alternative to the UPS's of this world. I think they should get involved. Just look around. Things aren't getting better. They're getting worse. And we don't have forever."

Workers need an organization, a revolutionary organization, to help achieve the goal of workers' democracy and workers' control. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) is totally committed to building such an organization. We want an organization where ordinary people can come together in a common cause. We want a place where working people can meet together freely to discuss their ideas, problems, aspirations. We want an organization where blacks can meet with whites, where white collar workers and blue collar workers can share experiences, where housewives, students, intellectuals and unemployed can get together in the context of a shared struggle and commitment to socialism.

We also want—and are committed to helping build—a full-fledged revolutionary workers' party, an organized layer of thousands of manual and brain workers, firmly rooted amongst their fellow workers, with shared ideas on the need for socialism and the way to achieve it. We want—in the here and now—an organi-

zation that can coordinate and unify the many partial, day-to-day struggles on contracts, wages, rent, day care, police brutality, gay rights, welfare, union reform, nuclear power, into a forward looking movement based on a strategy for the transformation of society—in this country and every country. This will take time, of course, but it will never be achieved if we don't begin today.

A socialist revolution is a revolution of the majority, the hundreds of millions against the few thousand who now hold power in their hands. No small group can bring socialism. No army can carry it on the ends of their bayonets. "The emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself," Karl Marx said. We want men and women who share our hatred of tyranny and inhumanity to join us. Together, we will find others who share this vision. In time, there will be millions. And for those millions, there is a "world to win."

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About the author

Mary Deaton has worked at UPS since 1975, except for the ten months she was fired; except for the week she was off with a concussion; except for the two weeks she was off with a back injury; and except for the last 16 months she has been off with a permanent injury to her right arm. Freed from the drudgery of the 10-hour day, she is now working as a free-lance writers.

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